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VBH BOT ePacket Public Safety FYI

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The village of Barrington's fire department is looking to cut back on costs while providing the same quality of services to community members.

By Morgan Delack Barrington Patch
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With the downswing in the economy, budget reductions have been made in many villages, including Barrington. The Barrington Fire Department is looking into ways to improve service at a reduced cost.

One way Barrington is providing high quality services without breaking the bank is by relying on neighbors for assistance when needed.

"If a major fire were to occur, neither we or any other community could afford to have enough firefighters on duty to contain the fire," Village Manager Jeff Lawler said. "This is overcome with mutual aid with surrounding neighbors."

Actual structure fires don't happen often and are a very small fraction of the calls received by the fire department on a daily basis. Keeping large amounts of firefighters on duty at a given time would be a waste of resources.

"Mutual aid provides the additional staffing from our neighbors when needed. We have more than a dozen fire stations within 10 miles. This provides the redundancy of personnel when needed for rare events," Lawler explained.

The majority of calls received by the fire department are medical in nature. Another 23 percent are false fire alarm calls, which can certainly be prevented by improving business and residential fire alarm and sprinkler technology.

Taking measures like relying on mutual aid to reduce the number of staff on duty, and decreasing the amount of false fire alarm calls and other incidents are all ways the department is working to reduce costs while keeping services top notch.

"Like us, a number of other communities are now studying ways to find greater efficiencies that will provide the taxpayer the service needed at the lowest cost," Lawler said.

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